United Nations A/HRC/38/32/Add.1

General Assembly

Distr.: General
30 April 2018
English
Original: French

Human Rights Council
Thirty-eighth session
18 June–6 July 2018
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education on her mission to Côte d'Ivoire

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to transmit to the Human Rights Council the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education on her mission to Côte d'Ivoire from 4 to 11 December 2017.

In her report, the Special Rapporteur welcomes the progress made by the Ivorian Government, which has incorporated the right to education into the Constitution and the National Development Plan and has allocated over 20 per cent of its budget to education and training. She reviews the legal framework governing the education system and the improvements made in order to achieve "the four As" of the right to education: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability.

In her report, the Special Rapporteur describes not only the considerable progress made with respect to the right to education but also the major challenges faced by Côte d'Ivoire. She acknowledges the key role played by parents and the community in education management; the importance of continuous financial support for the various entities that assist the Government in its efforts to provide free, quality education for all; and the need to modernize and increase the appeal of technical education and vocational training.

Lastly, the Special Rapporteur makes recommendations on how to step up efforts at the national level to implement the right to education in Côte d'Ivoire and to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 by ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

GE.18-06824 (E) 180518 220518

1806824

Please recycle

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education on her mission to Côte d'Ivoire*

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	Overview	3
III.	Legal framework governing the right to education	4
	A. International obligations of Côte d'Ivoire	4
	B. The right to education and the national legal system	5
IV.	The education system in Côte d'Ivoire	5
	A. Preschool, primary and secondary education	5
	B. Technical education and vocational training	7
	C. Higher education	7
	D. Community participation: school management committees	8
V.	The four As of the right to education	8
	A. Availability	9
	B. Accessibility	10
	C. Acceptability	10
	D. Adaptability	11
VI.	Key issues concerning the education system	11
	A. Inclusive education	11
	B. Child and adult literacy	12
	C. Students' academic performance	12
	D. Measures to promote technical education and vocational training	13
	E. Innovation and good practices in the Ivorian education system	13
VII.	Conclusions and recommendations	14
	A. Conclusions	14
	B. Recommendations	14

* Circulated in the language of submission and English only.

I. Introduction

1. The Special Rapporteur on the right to education conducted an official visit to Côte d'Ivoire from 4 to 11 December 2017 at the invitation of the Ivorian Government.

2. During her visit, the Special Rapporteur met with a team from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She held work sessions with Kandia Kamissoko Camara, the Minister of National Education, Technical Education and Vocational Training; Ramata Ly-Bakayoko, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research; Mariatou Koné, the Minister for Women, Child Protection and Solidarity; and Mamadou Touré, the Minister of State for Technical Education and Vocational Training. She was also received by members of the National Human Rights Commission and the presidents of Felix Houphouët-Boigny University and Alassane Ouattara University. She met with representatives of the school management committees' coordinating body, the Fédération estudiantine et scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire, many civil society organizations, teachers' unions, and financial and technical partners such as the Agence française de développement, the World Bank and organizations that run development programmes and projects.

3. The Special Rapporteur was able to visit some preschools, primary schools and secondary schools, including a local secondary school in Languibonou, as well as two universities and an institute: Felix Houphouët-Boigny University, Alassane Ouattara University and Felix Houphouët-Boigny National Polytechnic Institute in Yamoussoukro. She met with their senior management teams, teachers and students. The Special Rapporteur also met with members of the international community, including representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). She visited education centres in Abidjan, Yamoussoukro and Bouaké.

4. The Special Rapporteur would like to thank the Ivorian Government for its invitation and its readiness to collaborate. She is also grateful to the whole UNDP team, especially its Resident Representative, Babacar Cissé, for providing effective administrative and logistical support, and to all those who took the time to share their experiences in the field of education with her. She would like to thank the media for helping to publicize the outcomes of her visit.

II. Overview

5. Between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries, Côte d'Ivoire was a land of migration and asylum, welcoming various ethnic groups such as the Mandé (Dan, Gban and Kwéni), Ligbi, Numu, Sénoufo, Malinké or Mandé-Dioula (Kamagaté, Keita, Binaté and Diomandé), Efié, Essouma, Abouré, Alladian and Avikam groups. During the eighteenth century, there was large-scale migration of Akan groups (Agni, Baoulé, Atié, Abbey, Ébriés, M'Battos and Abidji) to the south-east and centre of the country and migration of other Malinké groups from the south of present-day Mali and Burkina Faso.

6. The Portuguese explorers João de Santarém and Pedro Escobar stayed on the Ivorian coast from 1470 to 1471. They were followed by Dutch explorers in the late sixteenth century, then by French and English explorers in the seventeenth century. In 1893, Côte d'Ivoire became a French colony and a member of French West Africa. The country became an autonomous republic following a referendum in 1958, before gaining independence in 1960.

7. Côte d'Ivoire is characterized by cultural wealth and diversity; it has 22.6 million inhabitants, of whom 48 per cent are women, 77 per cent are young people (up to 35 years old) and 5.5 million are foreign nationals, according to the 2014 census.[1] It is home to around sixty ethnic groups, in addition to the four major ones, namely the Akan, the

[1] See http://www.ins.ci/n/documents/RGPH2014_expo_dg.pdf.

Malinké, the Gour and the Krou. Overall, 42 per cent of the country's inhabitants are Muslim, 34 per cent are Christian, 4 per cent are animists, 19 per cent have no religion and 1 per cent are members of other religions. The official language is French, while the most common African languages are Baoulé, Dioula, Dan, Anyin and Cebaara Senoufo.

8. With its strong economic assets, Côte d'Ivoire is seen as a subregional power. Some of its infrastructure — such as the second largest port in sub-Saharan Africa, an extensive road network and a recently expanded international airport — dates back to the two decades known as "the Ivorian miracle" (1960–1980). As regards agriculture, the country is the largest producer of cocoa in the world, with a market share of more than 35 per cent. It also ranks among the main African producers of several other export crops, such as rubber, cashew nuts, cotton, coffee, palm oil, bananas, pineapples and cola nuts.

9. The recent years of crisis had a negative impact on the poverty rate, which rose from 38.4 per cent in 2002 to 48.9 per cent in 2008. Poverty remains particularly widespread in rural areas: the rural poverty rate is 62.5 per cent, compared with 29.5 per cent in urban areas.

10. Since 2011, the country has enjoyed average annual growth of 9 per cent. In order to achieve its aim of turning Côte d'Ivoire into an emerging country by 2020, the Government adopted the 2016–2020 National Development Plan, which sets out structural measures that are designed to generate continuous growth driven by the private sector. In May 2016, the total funding pledged by financial backers, in the form of loans and donations, amounted to US$ 15.4 billion.

11. Despite these favourable conditions and the efforts of the Ivorian authorities, which have been unanimously praised by the international financial community, the country must overcome many challenges, particularly when it comes to combating corruption and improving the business environment, in order to fully regain its status as a driver of regional economic growth. In addition, growth must be distributed more evenly if there is to be a lasting improvement in development indicators.

12. The international community and the country's development partners supported the Government in its efforts to tackle the many challenges that arose following the post-electoral crisis; this enabled the Government to re-establish the necessary State institutions.

III. Legal framework governing the right to education

A. International obligations of Côte d'Ivoire

13. Côte d'Ivoire is a party to most of the international instruments that deal with the right to education, with the exception of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

14. The Government has taken steps to better address its international human rights obligations through national laws and policies.

15. In 1992, Côte d'Ivoire became a party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which establishes the right to education. It has also undertaken to work towards the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 4, which consists of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. The Special Rapporteur commends the Government on its commitment to pursuing these Goals, which is illustrated by their inclusion in the 2016–2020 National Development Plan. She encourages the authorities to continue attaching the utmost importance to Sustainable Development Goal 4, for education provides the foundation for freedom and economic growth and helps to drive progress and sustainable development.

16. Côte d'Ivoire has also made political commitments, together with the international community, in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015. Target 4.1 of Sustainable Development Goal 4 stipulates that, by 2030, Member States should ensure that

all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. The Ivorian Government has stated its political commitment to providing free, quality education for all in the amended Education Act, the new Constitution of 2016 and the 2016–2020 National Development Plan.

B. The right to education and the national legal system

17. As regards the country's institutional and legislative framework, articles 9 and 10 of the 2016 Constitution explicitly establish the right of all individuals to education and vocational training and the principle of compulsory education for all girls and boys. Furthermore, article 32 of the Constitution affirms that the State undertakes to cater for the specific needs of vulnerable persons and to ensure their access to health services, education, employment, culture, sport and leisure activities.

18. Article 33 establishes that the State is responsible for protecting persons with disabilities from all forms of discrimination and degrading treatment, including by enabling them to exercise their rights with respect to education.

19. Act No. 2015-635 of 17 September 2015, amending Education Act No. 95-696 of 7 September 1995, establishes that education is compulsory for children aged between 6 and 16 years old; this reflects the country's aim of ensuring that all children complete lower secondary education in order to acquire the skills needed to be able to continue their studies or find employment.

20. The principle of free public education is enshrined in article 2 of Education Act No. 95-696. Failure to comply with this Act, which has been in force since the beginning of the 2015/16 academic year, is punishable by a fine of up to 500,000 CFA francs (CFAF) (around US$ 900) or 2 to 6 months' imprisonment.

IV. The education system in Côte d'Ivoire

21. The education system in Côte d'Ivoire, as in other French-speaking West African countries, is a legacy of French colonialism. It covers the following areas: preschool education, primary education, lower and upper secondary education, technical education and vocational training, and higher education. There are also literacy and non-formal education centres for adolescents who have never attended school or who left school early and for illiterate adults. Lessons are taught in French, although bilingual teaching in various national languages has been tested in some places and clearly has potential.

22. Côte d'Ivoire has made considerable efforts in the field of education over the past few years, with the aim of ensuring universal access to free, compulsory, quality primary education. Overall, 84 per cent of students attend public schools, 14 per cent attend private schools and 2 per cent attend schools run by the community. The Special Rapporteur is pleased to note that the country has stepped up its efforts to improve access to education in an inclusive manner by setting up pilot projects for the inclusion of vulnerable groups such as children from poor families and children with disabilities. As a result, the percentage of children of primary school age who are not enrolled in school has fallen significantly in recent years, from 43.3 per cent in 2009 to 9 per cent in 2017.

A. Preschool, primary and secondary education

Preschool education

23. Preschool coverage in Côte d'Ivoire remains poor. In 2008, the net preschool enrolment ratio stood at 13 per cent in urban areas and 1 per cent in rural areas. Moreover, 84 per cent of children enrolled in preschools lived in towns and 16 per cent in villages. This limited growth in preschool education has been attributed to: (a) a lack of awareness of

the importance of preschool education among some sectors of the population; (b) inadequate preschool infrastructure in some areas of the country; and (c) the fact that two ministries share the responsibility for preschool education.[2]

24. Recently, however, there has been a marked expansion in preschool education. Between the academic years 2014/15 and 2016/17, the number of children enrolled in preschools rose from 11,000 to 16,889, or by more than 53.5 per cent. There are 107 community activity centres for children and 88 centres for the protection of young children, which promote the well-being and development of children up to the age of 5 years old.

25. The Government has stated that it intends to set up a total of 8,500 centres for the protection of young children, each of which would be attached to a primary school. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the measures and strategies that are being implemented by both the Ministry for Women, Child Protection and Solidarity and the Ministry of National Education, Technical Education and Vocational Training with a view to establishing a preschool alongside each primary school. Thanks to the increase in the number of preschool establishments, the number of learners has risen by more than 133 per cent over six years, from 74,709 in 2010/11 to 174,264 in 2016/17.

Primary and secondary education

26. Act No. 2015-635 of 17 September 2015, amending Education Act No. 95-696 of 7 September 1995, establishes that education is compulsory for children aged between 6 and 16 years old.

27. However, overcrowding in primary schools means that they are unable to perform well. During her visits to schools, the Special Rapporteur noted that class sizes ranged from 50 to 150 pupils in most public primary schools and in secondary schools. When she met with representatives of civil society organizations, they raised concerns about the shortage of teachers for subjects such as mathematics, English and French.

28. The rise in lower secondary school enrolment can be attributed to the increase in the number of children who complete primary education, in combination with the increase in the number of pupils who pass the primary school leaving examinations. In order to reduce overcrowding in secondary schools and improve the quality of education in rural areas, the Government has set up some small lower secondary schools, known as local secondary schools, in rural areas. These schools provide the same education as ordinary secondary schools, the only difference being that teachers are assigned to teach more than one subject. They must be situated close to local communities so that pupils do not have to travel more than 5 km to get to school. This allows children to remain with their families and gives them a greater sense of security, which is particularly important for girls, many of whom fall pregnant during adolescence and drop out of school as a result.

Faith schools

29. There are Catholic, Protestant and Qur'anic faith schools. During her mission, the Special Rapporteur visited a Qur'anic school in Bouaké. She learned that many Qur'anic schools had joined the formal education system so as to acquire State recognition, having previously been left to their own devices. Schools that obtain such recognition, including Qur'anic schools, are required to teach the national curriculum. This gives their students access to a wider range of study options.

30. State recognition of these schools also implies a degree of State oversight. These schools are partially funded by the State. Although Qur'anic schools are responsible for recruiting and paying their teachers, the State is responsible for training those teachers in order to ensure that national minimum quality standards are met. However, the Special Rapporteur discovered during her visit to a Qur'anic school that only two of the seven teachers working there had received such training.

[2] See http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002298/229860F.pdf.

31. Another concern raised by the management team of the Qur'anic school was that some qualifications awarded in Arab countries were not recognized by the State. The fact that persons seeking permission to run a school must submit an application in French also poses a problem. In order to tackle this problem, the Special Rapporteur suggested establishing links with universities with a view to setting up university departments that cater for both academic and religious education.

32. The Special Rapporteur noted that there was a good gender balance in the lower classes of the primary schools that she visited but that the balance shifted in the upper classes, as the number of girls decreased. The Special Rapporteur encourages the Government to continue implementing incentive measures to ensure that girls successfully complete their education at the Qur'anic schools that are being modernized (209 schools, out of 1,117 that applied).

B. Technical education and vocational training

33. In Côte d'Ivoire and in the subregion more generally, traditional apprenticeships are one of the most common types of training undertaken by young people who have left school. In many cases, however, such apprenticeships are lengthy and may not lead to the acquisition of skills or a qualification. Steps are therefore being taken to improve the quality of apprenticeships by setting up dual apprenticeship systems.[3]

34. The Youth Employment and Skills Development Project includes, among other components, an apprenticeship programme, which is being implemented by the National Agency for Vocational Training. Under this dual apprenticeship scheme, young persons aged 18 to 24 years old are placed with companies for an apprenticeship that lasts between one and two years. They are given practical in-house training, guidance from an apprenticeship advisor and the opportunity to participate in theoretical training courses. They also receive a monthly stipend of CFAF 30,000 and insurance coverage.

35. The Special Rapporteur notes with interest that one of the aims of the Government's 2017–2020 Technical Education and Vocational Training Strategy is to raise the standard of training centre facilities. As of 2020, technical education and vocational training will be rolled out more widely. The Government also plans to set up training programmes for instructors, with support from other States.

36. The Special Rapporteur emphasizes the importance of successful collaboration between the ministries responsible for education and the various sectors of production, in order to build bridges between primary education, secondary education, vocational training and employment. Good coordination with the Ministry for Youth Development, Youth Employment and Civic Service is also necessary.

37. The Special Rapporteur was informed that there are training and education establishments for women. These were the first schools for women to be set up in Côte d'Ivoire. They have been providing training for Ivorian women since 1958. Students at these establishments can go on to complete vocational training. There are currently 118 of these schools, with others being built around the country; they contribute to the empowerment of women, although their courses increasingly cater for men as well. The Government has expressed its intention to reform these institutes by modernizing them and by setting up new courses in fields such as entrepreneurship.

C. Higher education

38. There are six public universities in Côte d'Ivoire. Each year, 500,000 students leave secondary school and enter university; there are not enough places at public universities, so

[3] Report on the short-term impacts of dual apprenticeships on young people and businesses: assessment of the apprenticeship component of the Youth Employment and Skills Development Project, Côte d'Ivoire, 25 July 2017.

some students are encouraged to attend private universities. According to the information received, it is often very expensive to attend such universities, which means that they are inaccessible to many students with severely limited resources. In order to tackle this problem, the Government is working to decentralize higher education by opening universities in all regions. New universities in San Pedro and Bondoukou should be operational by 2020.

39. The Special Rapporteur also noted with interest the establishment, in December 2015, of the Virtual University of Côte d'Ivoire, which is exclusively dedicated to online and distance learning. She noted that, according to the Government, the initial problems encountered by users of the Virtual University were being resolved.

40. The Government has established a system of bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and doctorates with the aim of meeting international standards, improving the quality of higher education and increasing the employability of university graduates. The Special Rapporteur received reports that the new system is poorly understood by students and teachers alike. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research allocates 5.1 per cent of its budget to research and innovation; the remaining 94.9 per cent is spent on other programmes. Côte d'Ivoire currently spends less than 0.4 per cent of its gross domestic product on research and development, compared with the African Union Agenda 2063 recommendation of 1 per cent.

D. Community participation: school management committees

41. The Special Rapporteur noted that the State has set up participatory bodies known as school management committees in primary and secondary schools, in order to ensure that communities are closely involved in managing the education system. These independent bodies have executive boards, which are made up of 11 or 12 members: 6 parents of students, 2 teachers, 1 bursar, 2 students and, at secondary school level, 1 inspector general.

42. School management committees are responsible for helping to maintain the buildings and facilities; helping to provide civic and moral education; fostering links between the school and the local community; supporting the socio-educational and learning activities run by the school; and helping to deal with the lack of teachers and instructors. They are also tasked with monitoring textbook management; helping to educate the students, especially girls; promoting the school canteen; and collecting and managing all of the school's financial resources, aside from the funding provided by the State.

43. Each school management committee consists of four bodies: the general assembly, which is the committee's decision-making body; the executive board, which is responsible for administration and management; the auditor's office, which is a monitoring body; and the subsidiary assemblies. The general assembly is composed of the mayor or the president of the regional council; the head teacher of the school and, where appropriate, the head teachers of the other schools in the school complex; the members of the executive board; two student representatives; one teacher from each class or level; parents of students; and other community representatives.

44. It has been noted, however, that school management committees do not always operate smoothly; problems include poor management of financial resources and poor communication, resulting in a failure to involve members in strategic decision-making. There are over 8,000 such committees, of which 3,000 receive State funding. The Special Rapporteur emphasized the need to provide these committees with greater technical and financial support and to improve their planning and management, for they are the backbone of the basic education system.

V. The four As of the right to education

45. In order to implement the right to education, it is necessary to develop available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable programmes. Availability means that education must be free and financed by the Government, with appropriate infrastructure and trained

teachers who meet the relevant teaching requirements. Accessibility means that the system must be accessible to all, without geographical, economic, social or cultural discrimination, and affirmative action must be taken to include groups that are particularly marginalized. Acceptability means that the content of education must be relevant, non-discriminatory, culturally appropriate and of good quality; the school environment must be healthy and safe and the teachers must be professionals. Adaptability means that education must evolve with the changing needs of society and help to challenge inequalities, especially gender discrimination, and it must be able to be adapted locally to suit specific contexts.

A. Availability

46. With regard to funding, as previous Special Rapporteurs have pointed out, investment in education is a human rights obligation that States must fulfil. The Ivorian Government has approved a 10-year plan for the education and training sector for 2016–2025, at an estimated cost of CFAF 5,246 billion for the period 2017–2020, with the aim of providing inclusive, quality basic education for all. An additional sum of CFAF 19.1 billion has been set aside for measures to increase the enrolment rate among girls. In 2017, a total of CFAF 908 million was allocated to the literacy programme.

47. In principle, for the right to education to be effectively implemented, public education should be free, without any costs that might act as a barrier. The Education Act provides that public school education should be free and available to all; however, some costs, such as enrolment fees, social services and the cost of textbooks and other school supplies, are not covered. These exceptions mean that low-income families are likely to come into conflict with the law, because they do not have the financial means necessary to cover the compulsory extra costs of their children's education. Moreover, according to the information received, in rural areas particularly, communities must sometimes contribute to the remuneration of voluntary teachers through subsidies paid to the school management committee, which has led UNESCO to conclude that households cover between 30 and 37 per cent of the costs of education.

Primary education

48. Universal primary education, which has been identified as Sustainable Development Goal 4 and a goal of the African Union, is also a key goal of the Ivorian Government. With the support of international bodies and local stakeholders, the Government has launched a series of initiatives relating to the renovation and construction of school infrastructure, the training and recruitment of teachers and the purchase of teaching materials and equipment.

Secondary education

49. The number of secondary schools has risen slightly over the past five years. The Special Rapporteur is pleased to note that the Government allocated a budget of CFAF 333 billion to the development of secondary education in the 2016–2020 National Development Plan. This investment will be used, in particular, for the renovation, construction and equipment of school buildings and the recruitment of staff.

Teacher training

50. As in many countries, the lack of qualified teachers is a challenge for the authorities; this problem concerns all levels of the education system, including higher education. It can also be noted that the geographical distribution of teaching staff at both primary and secondary level is very uneven, with a high concentration of teachers in major cities. Around 30 specialized schools help to provide training for teaching and educational support staff, under the responsibility of the relevant ministries. The Special Rapporteur recommends working hand in hand with universities to resolve the practical problems that arise when dealing with large class sizes and to promote a teaching method that focuses on the learner and on cultural values. She also recommends taking steps to increase the prestige of the teaching profession in order to motivate teachers to perform well.

51. The Special Rapporteur noted that most primary schoolteachers were considered qualified in Côte d'Ivoire, yet the minimum qualification required by the Government was the certificate of completion of the first stage of secondary education.

52. The country's efforts to improve the quality of teacher training establishments have been supported by several partners, with a particular focus on information and communications technology.

B. Accessibility

53. The information gathered during the Special Rapporteur's visit shows that access to primary education is uneven, with major disparities between urban and rural areas and particularly poor coverage in the north and north-east of the country.

54. Each year, once the results of the primary school leaving examination have been announced, the National Commission on Study Options holds a conference, during which the vast majority of primary school leavers are assigned to secondary schools; however, public secondary schools cannot cater for such a large number of pupils. The Government turns to the private sector to deal with this lack of capacity, at a cost of around CFAF 80 billion per year. Private education sometimes entails additional costs for students, ranging from CFAF 30,000 to CFAF 200,000.

55. Although progress has been made in terms of access to education, the Special Rapporteur strongly recommends that the Government take steps to improve the quality of the education system. The last assessment carried out under the Education System Analysis Programme of the Conférence des Ministres de l'éducation des États et gouvernements de la Francophonie in 2014 showed that 47 per cent of pupils in the second year of primary school and 82 per cent of students in the final year of primary school had not reached an adequate level in reading and mathematics. The next assessment will be carried out in 2019.

56. Act No. 98-594 of 10 November 1998 concerns persons with disabilities. Article 2 of the Act establishes that persons with disabilities have the right to education on an equal basis with others. Article 13 of the Act states that all school, university and training facilities must be accessible to persons with disabilities. However, access for children with disabilities to schools and vocational training facilities remains limited. Furthermore, staff lack the necessary technical skills to support children with specific needs, including children with disabilities.

C. Acceptability

Secondary school success rates

57. In 2017, the rate of success in the examinations at the end of the first and second stages of secondary education was, in both cases, under 50 per cent. The Special Rapporteur commends the Ivorian Government for planning measures that are designed to raise these rates to at least 80 per cent. Statistics show that the rates of completion of lower secondary and upper secondary education rose by 9 per cent and 3.3 per cent respectively between 2011 and 2016.

Vocational training

58. The Government acknowledges that there are so few links between the education system and the world of work that vocational training courses do not correspond to employers' needs. The higher education system is so inflexible that training courses in fields with limited job prospects continue to be taught without any major adaptations. Similarly, research is conducted without taking into account the needs of the production sector.

59. The strategy for 2017–2020 includes plans to overhaul and update the system, renovate existing facilities and build new ones. The Government is working with several partners, including the Agence française de développement, the World Bank, UNICEF,

UNESCO, Japan, Morocco, Canada and China, to implement pilot projects that involve the private sector and local communities, in order to increase the relevance and effectiveness of vocational training. The idea is to roll out similar projects more widely, building on the lessons learned during this first stage.

D. Adaptability

60. Although some progress has been made, equal access to education for girls has not yet been achieved. Parents continue to prioritize boys' education over girls' education, especially in rural areas. Furthermore, the sanitary facilities in many schools are not appropriate for girls and there is a high rate of adolescent pregnancy. The steps taken by the Ivorian Government have helped to significantly reduce this rate in some places but further efforts must be made to improve monitoring, prevention and response measures. It should also be noted that the 2016–2020 National Development Plan includes policies that are intended to reduce the number of adolescent pregnancies.

61. The Special Rapporteur commends the Government for adopting a strategic plan to promote girls' education, which sets out measures to tackle pregnancy in schools, including a campaign entitled "Zero Pregnancies at School" and community mobilization.

62. According to the Ivorian press, however, there were around 4,471 pregnancies in general secondary schools in Côte d'Ivoire in 2016/17, compared with 4,054 in 2015/16.[4]

63. In 2007, the Government set up monitoring committees to increase the number of girls who enrol and remain in school and mobilized communities to take action, for example through clubs for mothers of girl pupils. These clubs are involved in major projects, such as the establishment of permanent school canteens, and are increasingly focused on turning school management committees into an essential tool. Activities carried out by these clubs include helping parents to apply for birth certificates, raising girls' and boys' awareness of forced marriage and adolescent pregnancy, helping girls to gain access to transitional classes and helping parents to enrol their children in school.

VI. Key issues concerning the education system

64. The main challenges in the field of education relate to access to education, quality of education and governance of the education system.

65. Considerable efforts are being made to raise the quality of education, through the reinstatement of lessons on Wednesday mornings; vocational training for teachers; the development of an education and literacy strategy aimed at adolescents and adults, especially women; and the provision of quality teaching materials.

A. Inclusive education

66. According to data from 2008, poverty affects 48.9 per cent of the Ivorian population and is concentrated in rural areas. Bearing in mind that education-related costs account for 30 to 37 per cent of household spending and that secondary and higher education costs are rising each year, how can poor families afford to cover the basic cost of education?

67. The Special Rapporteur recommends continuing to provide free textbooks and school supplies to vulnerable sectors of the population in rural areas in order to turn Côte d'Ivoire into an inclusive, emerging country.

68. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the considerable efforts made to involve local communities in education through the school management committees, which serve as permanent bodies for education planning and management, as well as the measures taken to provide free teaching materials. School management committees are able to identify

[4] See http://news.abidjan.net/h/613225.html.

children at risk of not being enrolled in school for financial reasons and children with specific needs, and to help them gain access to education facilities that are appropriate for their situation. The Special Rapporteur visited inclusive primary and secondary schools where children with visual or hearing impairments were integrated into mainstream classes. The primary school that she visited seemed to have taken on board the concept of inclusiveness and all class teachers were able to communicate using sign language; in the secondary school that she visited, however, only one teacher was competent in sign language. Children with hearing impairments in inclusive schools of that kind are at an immediate disadvantage compared to other learners. If no sign language interpreting is available, these children have to make do with using their classmates' notes to understand what the teacher is trying to teach them. In such situations, the child's learning is dependent on their classmate's understanding of the lesson. Measures should be taken to support children with disabilities by training teachers at the Teacher Training and Activity Centre and the Teacher Training College.

B. Child and adult literacy

69. A large number of literacy centres have been set up in Côte d'Ivoire; these centres are primarily aimed at illiterate women, for example women who sell their products at markets. It should be noted that these centres are open to anyone wishing to learn.

70. In October 2017, the Government announced that the illiteracy rate in Côte d'Ivoire was 43.8 per cent. It hopes to reduce this figure to 20 per cent by 2020. Information gathered in the field shows that the Government has launched initiatives to enable adolescents and adults who are no longer of school age, especially women, to gain access to education through transitional schools and literacy centres. The Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government work with communal authorities and school management committees to set up a decentralized, independently managed fund to support literacy activities throughout the country. The Special Rapporteur encourages the Government to invest at least 3 per cent of the budget in non-formal education and in improving literacy rates among adolescents and adults, as they are the workers who have the potential to make Côte d'Ivoire an emerging country.

C. Students' academic performance

71. The Ivorian school system has been severely affected by years of instability. A survey conducted by the National Institute of Statistics[5] revealed that almost one in two children aged between 6 and 11 years old did not attend school; there was a difference in enrolment rates for boys and girls (59 per cent and 51 per cent, respectively) and a significant disparity between urban and rural areas (66 per cent and 48 per cent, respectively).[6]

72. According to UNICEF, the low enrolment rate was essentially due to the inadequacy of the education system: there were not enough teachers or school buildings. Children who attended school did not always receive a quality education and were therefore unlikely to reach the fifth year of primary school (52 per cent). The poor quality of education also affected parents' motivation to send their children to school.[7]

73. Since then, the situation has improved. The Government has carried out various reforms to improve the performance of primary, secondary and higher education establishments, including technical schools. It has also allocated more budgetary resources to the education sector.

[5] Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006 (MICS 2006), National Institute of Statistics and UNICEF.

[6] See https://www.unicef.org/cotedivoire/education.html.

[7] Ibid.

74. In May 2017, the Ivorian Government published the latest statistics, for the period 2012–2017.[8] These show that the gross primary enrolment ratio, which is based on the total school-age population, has risen to 104.6 per cent, compared with 89 per cent in 2011. The net enrolment ratio, which concerns only children aged between 6 and 11 years old, is 91 per cent.

75. These statistics also show that the primary school completion rate rose from 59.1 to 75 per cent between 2012 and 2016, and from 52 to 71.6 per cent for girls. The rates of completion of lower and upper secondary education rose by 9 per cent and 3.3 per cent, respectively, between 2011 and 2016. The percentage of girls who reach the fourth year of secondary education rose from 30 to 42 per cent.

76. The Government has taken measures to increase the overall proportion of girls who enrol in school, remain in education and succeed in their studies. Some progress has been made towards reducing the gender gap in primary and secondary school enrolment.

D. Measures to promote technical education and vocational training

77. Côte d'Ivoire has adopted a strategic action plan for 2017–2020 to raise the standard of vocational training. Under this plan, the range of courses available will be expanded and course curricula will be progressively revised, in close collaboration with the private sector.

78. The Special Rapporteur was informed that the Government planned to build, renovate and better equip vocational training facilities, in an effort to increase access to and improve the quality of technical education and vocational training in Côte d'Ivoire. Three centres that have fallen into disrepair will be renovated and new centres will be built, taking into account local economic capacities.

79. In order to improve the governance of vocational training facilities, eight establishments will be set up as part of a pilot project involving the private sector, with the aim of reducing youth unemployment by promoting technical education and vocational training. The Government has expressed its intention to invest heavily in this area as of 2020 and to create an environment in which more children choose to undertake vocational training. The aim of this initiative is to increase the vocational training rate from 14 per cent in 2017 to 50 per cent in 2050. The Government is also keen to help trainees to find employment. In order to achieve this, these young people must pursue a course that offers access to the labour market. The courses taught in the schools that are part of the pilot project will be more practical than theoretical. There are plans to set up a training course that leads to a qualification for children who are unable to attend school, children who have been excluded from school and people without qualifications. This course will be taught in mobile classrooms over a period of six months.

80. The Minister of State reported that the Government is trying to change the image of vocational training and encourage students to pursue it by choice, the aim being to ensuring access to the labour market for as many young people as possible.

81. During her visits to technical schools, the Special Rapporteur noted that the infrastructure was adequate but the equipment used in lessons was in a bad state. In addition, there is not enough collaboration with the industrial and informal sectors and many of the students who graduate from technical schools are reportedly unable to find paid work.

E. Innovation and good practices in the Ivorian education system

82. The Ministry of National Education, Technical Education and Vocational Training has drawn up fact sheets on innovation and good practices in the Ivorian education system.

[8] See http://news.abidjan.net/h/616059.html.

83. According to the information received by the Special Rapporteur, these innovative measures and good practices include the following:

(a) Education for peace;

(b) The education policy and the legal framework;

(c) Community involvement in managing the education system;

(d) Education in rural areas: local secondary schools and school canteens;

(e) The use of national languages in education;

(f) The national strategy on girls' education;

(g) Inclusive education: the inclusion of children with hearing and visual impairments in the formal system, from preschool through to secondary education;

(h) The testing of information and communications technology at all levels, from primary schools through to universities.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

84. **The Special Rapporteur welcomes the efforts made by the Ivorian Government to realize the right to education, both in terms of the funding allocated to basic education (over 20 per cent of the national budget) and with respect to legislation and school infrastructure.**

85. **The establishment of the principle of free, compulsory primary education through the adoption of the amended Education Act in 2015 and the new Constitution in 2016 represents an important first step towards basic education that is completely free of charge and accessible to all.**

86. **The Government has taken some very positive steps regarding the access of girls and vulnerable groups to education; the rehabilitation of school infrastructure; the establishment of local secondary schools; and the launch of the Virtual University. The Special Rapporteur recognizes the important work of civil society with regard to innovation and the action taken by communities to promote the right to education of vulnerable groups around the country.**

87. **The Special Rapporteur observed that the country was facing challenges in its mission to improve the accessibility and quality of basic education. These challenges included illiteracy, governance and quality of learning.**

88. **The years between now and 2030 represent a major opportunity for Côte d'Ivoire to pursue the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 4.**

89. **In the light of the above and in accordance with the conclusions drawn from the mission, the Special Rapporteur makes the following recommendations with a view to helping to improve the education system in Côte d'Ivoire.**

B. Recommendations

Legal framework

90. **The Special Rapporteur recommends that the Ivorian Government consider progressively implementing Act No. 2015-635 of 17 September 2015, amending Education Act No. 95-696 of 7 September 1995, especially its mandatory component, until the State is able to fulfil its obligations in terms of access to education, availability of teachers, school supplies and so on.**

91. **The Special Rapporteur encourages the Ivorian Government to disseminate clear information on the content of the current Education Act and on its education policy, so as to ensure the effective implementation of the Act.**

92. **Côte d'Ivoire is also encouraged to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families with a view to implementing the articles on the right to education contained therein.**

Strengthening the teaching profession and improving the quality of the education system

93. **To ensure quality teaching, it is important to continue providing incentives for teachers in both the public and private sectors and to recruit teachers for basic education who have obtained an upper secondary leaving certificate at least. In addition to the capacity-building programme for teachers, a follow-up, evaluation and skills development component delivered by senior teaching staff should be available and operational, where necessary. The Special Rapporteur encourages the Government to provide additional teachers in disciplines such as mathematics, French and English.**

94. **The Government is also encouraged to use information and communications technology to develop specific capacity-building programmes for teachers and literacy facilitators.**

95. **The Government should ensure that teachers in Catholic, Protestant and Qur'anic schools receive the training they need to be able to fulfil their commitment of providing quality education to students.**

96. **The Government should develop a special programme for the training and local supervision of volunteer teachers and literacy facilitators.**

97. **To improve the quality of primary and secondary education, the Government should continue revising the curricula of teacher training colleges to take into account the challenges of providing sustainable, inclusive, quality education with due regard for specific cultural and environmental factors.**

98. **With respect to higher education, the system of bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and doctorates needs to be contextualized and adapted to the situation in the country, so as to increase students' academic success and their employability following graduation.**

99. **The Special Rapporteur recommends that Côte d'Ivoire take measures to regulate the private sector in accordance with the principles of the right to education. The opportunity offered to Côte d'Ivoire by a civil society coalition to trial the use of human rights guidelines for private education providers is promising for the fight against the commercialization of education.**

100. **Côte d'Ivoire is encouraged to define and implement a strong, insightful and coherent strategy for drug control in schools, along the same lines as the "Zero Pregnancies at School" campaign.**

The role of parents and the community

101. **Education is not only the Government's responsibility; it is also a matter of social responsibility. Parents, teachers and communities have an important role to play in school management and the governance of education at the local level. The Government is encouraged to increase its efforts to include parents as key actors for improving education. Channels should be available for parents to report problems to the relevant authorities. Having established school management committees that serve as an entry point for the involvement of the community and parents in education, the Government has a duty to lend its support, including financial support, to those committees so that responsibilities may be shared. It would be useful to assess the governance of these committees on an annual basis in order to see what lessons can be learned and to capitalize on their achievements.**

102. **The activities of the clubs for mothers of girl pupils must also be encouraged, supported financially and leveraged as part of an overall process in order to enable them to carry out their work to improve student performance and access to education, especially for girls.**

Improving technical education and vocational training

103. **The perception of some teachers, students and parents that technical education and vocational training are a last resort should be altered. Technical education and vocational training should be made more attractive and should be viewed by the professional world as a system that produces the skilled workers that the Ivorian economy needs. Technical training institutions should not be treated as separate establishments but rather as an integral part of the youth education system in Côte d'Ivoire.**

104. **Technical education and vocational training should be promoted through awareness-raising for parents, children and the community. Interest in technical and vocational training in Côte d'Ivoire must be encouraged from primary school onward. The Special Rapporteur also recommends that a partnership be established with careers guidance services and universities to draw attention to the opportunities that may be offered by professional training and to encourage support for secondary and primary school leavers who would like to follow this path. The trend towards general education should be reversed in favour of education that is more technical and vocational in nature.**

105. **Recognizing that those leaving the technical and vocational education system have a major impact on the country's economic development, the Government should increase funding to secondary and post-secondary technical and vocational education establishments. The Special Rapporteur encourages the Government to continue exploring a wide range of funding mechanisms for this sector with private partners and States, in collaboration with universities in particular.**

106. **Stronger partnerships with industries are needed to ensure that graduates have the necessary skills to find work following graduation. There is also a need to organize action-oriented research and innovation for the sustainable development of these industries.**

107. **The Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government ensure coherence between the training system and the strategies and measures implemented by the ministries responsible for education, training and scientific research. In this regard, the establishment of a sectoral task force is strongly encouraged.**

108. **The ministries responsible for primary and secondary education and vocational training and the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection must work together effectively to ensure that young people who choose this path are able to enter the labour market.**

Funding for education

109. **The Government is to be commended for having devoted more than 20 per cent of its budget to basic education. This demonstrates a real commitment to improving the accessibility and quality of education. Nevertheless, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government also increase the budget for vocational training and job creation for young people and women, as well as the budget for preschool education and literacy.**

110. **Given that more than 40 per cent of the country's population is illiterate, the majority women and girls, it would be advisable to set up a decentralized, autonomous fund to support literacy activities throughout national territory in order to ensure adequate funding for the construction of decent premises, the provision of suitable teaching material, and the salaries of facilitators and supervisors working in literacy and non-formal education centres.**

The key role of Côte d'Ivoire in promoting the right to education in the West African subregion

111. **The Special Rapporteur strongly encourages the Ivorian Government to continue investing in ensuring equal access to inclusive and equitable quality education for all. She also encourages the Government to continue implementing the necessary measures and policies to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the system as a whole.**

112. **Côte d'Ivoire could serve as a model for other countries in the West African subregion, especially with regard to legislation, the decision to treat basic education as a budget priority and ongoing educational innovation.**

113. **The country is also encouraged to continue experimenting with inclusive education centres, and to circulate the results to the member countries of the Fondation Karanta;** [9] **it is important to share the relevant results regarding transitional schools with other countries in the subregion that are struggling to reach the most disadvantaged people.**

114. **The Special Rapporteur encourages Côte d'Ivoire to take a leadership role and call for the Economic Community of West African States to give further consideration to harmonizing education qualifications with the UNESCO concept of basic education adopted by those countries, which requires at least 10 years of education. Côte d'Ivoire is encouraged to question whether the Certificate of Elementary Primary Studies is an appropriate first-level qualification in today's world and to bear in mind the aims set out in the Incheon Declaration: Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.**

International partnerships and community cooperation

115. **International partners clearly support the Ivorian Government and should be encouraged to increase their contribution and strengthen political dialogue on the challenges of governance and quality.**

116. **Ultimately, widespread mobilization of all members of Ivorian society with respect to education is needed in order to give effect to the political will expressed by the Government.**

---

[9] A subregional mechanism established on 15 December 2000 to support non-formal education policies.